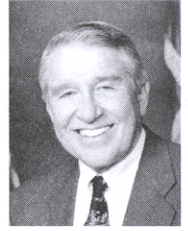




NEWS FROM
Jack Scott

21st SENATE DISTRICT



For Immediate Release
April 20, 2001

Contact: Gail Evans
916-445-5976

**DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE STUDY CONCLUDES SENATOR SCOTT
CONCEALED WEAPON LAW PRODUCES DRAMATIC INCREASE IN
FELONY CONVICTIONS**

1149 new felony charges for carrying concealed or loaded weapons

***Law enforcement credits AB 491 with taking guns
--and persons carry them illegally --off the street***

Senator Jack Scott (D-Pasadena) announced today the release of a California Department of Justice report which shows that Scott's AB 491 dramatically increased felony convictions for persons carrying loaded or concealed weapons. In the first six months of 2000, 1149 felony charges resulted from carrying concealed or loaded weapons, representing nearly half of those charged for these crimes.

"My AB 491 plugged a legal loophole," stated Senator Jack Scott. Carrying a loaded or concealed firearm is a serious crime, and it should be treated seriously."

"Before my legislation, criminals could be charged with felonies for carrying a switchblade, but only misdemeanors for carrying loaded guns. That just didn't make sense," Scott continued.

Police Chief Larry Todd, past President of California Police Chiefs Association and current Chair of their Firearms Committee, agrees:

"From our perspective, AB 491 was one of the most significant pieces of gun control legislation that ever passed in California," said Chief Todd "The reality of jail overcrowding means that people committing misdemeanors don't get arrested. Before this law, we could arrest someone carrying brass knuckles for a felony, but not someone carrying a gun. I've been a cop for 32 years; I've never seen anyone die from being hit with brass knuckles," Todd continued.

AB 491 dramatically increased the penalties for persons carrying a loaded or concealed firearm when the gun is not registered in their name. Prior to enactment of

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AB 491, only rarely could a person be charged with a felony for these offenses. The vast majority of offenders could only be prosecuted for misdemeanors. Only documented street gang members, felons, or persons with weapons convictions could be charged with a felony. For those individuals, it was usually a felony just to have a firearm, regardless of whether or not it was loaded or concealed.

"I'm happy to see that my bill has prompted prosecutors to aggressively pursue these cases as felonies, and that AB 491 has improved public safety," concluded Scott.

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